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89 ISLAMABAD 2288

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E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PREL, MOPS, MCAP, PHUM, PINS, PINR, PROP, PREF,

ASEC, UR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITREP, JANUARY 23 - 29, 1989

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDO/MR

REVIEWED by 15 DATE SEP 6 1990

☒ RELEASE ☐ DECLASSIFY

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☐ DENY ☐ Non-responsive info.

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REF: KABUL 00133

1. THE FOLLOWING SITREP WAS PREPARED AT EMBASSY ISLAMABAD IN THE WAKE OF THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF EMBASSY KABUL. EMBASSY ISLAMABAD, IN CONJUNCTION WITH AMCONSUL PESHAWAR, INTENDS TO PREPARE A WEEKLY SITREP IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHEDULE FOLLOWED BY EMBASSY KABUL. (MESSAGES WILL BE SENT EACH TUESDAY). ADDRESSEES NOT WISHING TO RECEIVE THIS WEEKLY SITREP SHOULD SO INFORM US. EMBASSY (USIS) WILL CONTINUE ITS REGULAR PRESS BRIEFINGS IN ISLAMABAD BUT WILL NOW USE THIS SITREP RATHER THAN THE ONE FROM KABUL. USIS WILL USE THE USUAL ATTRIBUTION, "WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES". FYI: ON JANUARY 31, WE BRIEFED 13 JOURNALISTS, INCLUDING ALL MAJOR NETWORKS BASED IN ISLAMABAD PLUS VISITING JOURNALISTS. THEY WERE DELIGHTED THAT ISLAMABAD HAD PICKED UP RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTINUING THE INSTITUTION OF THE KABUL SITREP, PARTICULARLY AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME. WE PLAN TO

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MAINTAIN THE TUESDAY SITREP BRIEFING SCHEDULE, BUT WILL HOLD ADDITIONAL BRIEFINGS SHOULD FAST-MOVING EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN WARRANT. END FYI.

2. SUMMARY: DURING THE LAST WEEK OF JANUARY, SOVIET TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN APPEARED TO BE PREPARING TO CONCLUDE THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN WITH FINAL PREPARATIONS NOTED IN KABUL AND AT SHINDAND AIRBASE IN FARAH PROVINCE. MEANWHILE, MUJAHIDIN GENERALLY CONTINUED A POLICY OF NOT ENGAGING RETREATING SOVIET TROOPS. MUJAHIDIN ALSO CONTINUED THEIR TWO-MONTH OLD "PAUSE" AROUND KABUL. SOVIET FORCES, HOWEVER, HAVE FAILED TO RECIPROCATE THESE UNILATERAL GESTURES, FLYING INTENSE BOMBING MISSIONS AGAINST CIVILIAN AND MUJAHIDIN TARGETS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF AFGHANISTAN.

3. IN ONE PARTICULARLY SAVAGE ENGAGEMENT, HUNDREDS OF CIVILIANS WERE KILLED IN PARWAN PROVINCE AND OTHER PROVINCES OF NORTHEAST AFGHANISTAN AS SOVIET FORCES UNLEASHED A MISSILE AND AIR BARRAGE AGAINST NUMEROUS VILLAGES SOUTH OF THE SALANG TUNNEL AND IN NEIGHBORING VALLEYS. MUJAHIDIN MEANWHILE HAVE TIGHTENED THE NOOSE AROUND KANDAHAR AIRPORT, BUT NOT SUFFICIENTLY TO BLOCK A MAJOR RESUPPLY EFFORT REPORTEDLY MOUNTED BY SOVIET AIRCRAFT FLOWN DIRECTLY FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

MUJAHIDIN ATTACKS AGAINST SHINDAND AIRBASE, FOCAL POINT FOR SOVIET AIR OPERATIONS IN SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST AFGHANISTAN, HAVE BEEN STYMIED BY A WIDE DEFENSE PERIMETER MANNED BY SOVIET FORCES. UNCONFIRMED REPORTS INDICATE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS PERIMETER IS BEING TURNED OVER TO REGIME TROOPS, AND THAT SOVIET TROOPS ARE BEING WITHDRAWN BY AIR FROM SHINDAND.

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4. WHILE MUCH ATTENTION CONTINUES TO BE DEVOTED TO  
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FOOD NEEDS IN KABUL AND JALALABAD, OTHER PARTS OF AFGHANISTAN CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE CHRONIC -- SOMETIMES SEVERE -- FOOD NEED AS INDICATED BY RECENT INTERVIEWS WITH REFUGEES AND MUJAHIDIN FROM SOUTH, WEST AND CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN. MOST WESTERN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS HAVE CLOSED OR ARE IN THE PROCESS OF CLOSING THEIR DOORS. END SUMMARY.

## SOVIET WITHDRAWAL DEVELOPMENTS

5. SOVIET SOURCES IN KABUL CONTEND THAT SOVIET TROOPS WOULD COMPLETE THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM KABUL BY FEBRUARY 2 - 6, WITH A CONTINGENT AT KABUL AIRPORT TO BE THE LAST TO BE WITHDRAWN. A SOVIET SOLDIER (OF THE 103RD GUARDS) STATIONED IN KABUL NOTED THAT ONE HALF OF HIS UNITS PERIMETER POSTS HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO REGIME TROOPS AS OF JANUARY 23. SEPARATE REPORTS, TENDING TO CONFIRM THE ABOVE, HELD THAT THERE WOULD BE A MASSIVE AIRLIFT TO EVACUATE SOVIET TROOPS DURING THE JANUARY

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28 - FEBRUARY 3 PERIOD.

6. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, TSARANDOI TROOPS (FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR) ARE EXPECTED TO SEE THEIR TOURS EXTENDED UNDER ORDERS ISSUED IN LATE JANUARY. (THIS EXTENSION, PRESUMABLY, WILL BE PART OF REGIME EFFORTS TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF DEFENSE OF KABUL AS SOVIET TROOPS EVACUATE FROM KABUL.) IN THE SAME VEIN, RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING IN KABUL THAT MARTIAL LAW MAY BE DECLARED IN THE CITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTURE OF SOVIET TROOPS (AND MOST DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS). SEPARATE SOURCES ALSO REPORT SOVIET TROOPS ARE BEING REPLACED BY REGIME TROOPS IN DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AROUND SHINDAND AIRPORT. SOVIET TROOPS ARE CONSOLIDATING BACK TO THE AIRBASE AND, ACCORDING TO ONE ACCOUNT, BEING EVACUATED TO THE SOVIET UNION.

## SOVIET OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS:

7. NOTWITHSTANDING MUJAHIDIN POLICY OF REFRAINING FROM ATTACKS ON DEPARTING SOVIET TROOPS AND, SPECIFICALLY, A "PAUSE" AROUND KABUL WHICH HAS SEEN ONLY TWO MUJAHIDIN ROCKET ATTACKS IN THE PAST TWO MONTHS, SOVIET FORCES CONTINUE TO CONDUCT MAJOR OFFENSIVE AND RESUPPLY OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF BELEAGUERED REGIME TROOPS. SOVIET AIRCRAFT, FLYING FROM SOVIET TERRITORY AND FROM BASES IN AFGHANISTAN, CONTINUE TO POUND MUJAHIDIN AROUND KANDAHAR WITH OCCASIONAL BOMBS EVEN EXPLODING IN KANDAHAR CITY. REPORTS CONTINUE TO NOTE CIVILIAN AND MUJAHIDIN CASUALTIES IN AND AROUND KANDAHAR. PARTICULARLY HEAVY SOVIET AIR, ROCKET AND ARTILLERY ATTACKS ARE CURRENTLY

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BEING TARGETTED AGAINST PORTIONS OF PARMAN, BAGHLAN  
AND OTHER NORTHEAST AFGHANISTAN PROVINCES.

8. SOVIET AND REGIME BOMBING AROUND JALALABAD HAS

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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITREP. JANUARY 23 - 29, 1989  
 PRODUCED CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND HAS BEEN A FACTOR IN  
 PRODUCING A NEW WAVE OF REFUGEES INTO PAKISTAN.

9. ON JANUARY 23, ACCORDING TO MULTIPLE SOURCES,  
 SOVIET ARTILLERY AND AIR STRUCK AT VILLAGES SOUTH OF  
 THE SALANG TUNNEL. THE ATTACK, WHICH BEGAN AT 0600  
 HOURS, WAS CONDUCTED BY ARTILLERY AT SOVIET/REGIME  
 BASES AT BARGAM, NEAR JABAL OS SARAJ AND A BASE 40 KMS  
 NORTH OF KABUL. THE ARTILLERY FIRE WAS SUPPORTED BY  
 HIGH ALTITUDE BOMBING AND WAS FOLLOWED BY GROUND  
 ASSAULTS BY BOTH SOVIET AND REGIME TROOPS. IN  
 ADDITION TO AND SIMULTANEOUS WITH ATTACKS IN THESE  
 AREAS, ATTACKS WERE ALSO STAGED AGAINST VILLAGES IN  
 THE PANJSHIR VALLEY. VILLAGERS IN THE PANJSHIR, LIKE  
 THOSE SOUTH OF THE SALANG TUNNEL, WERE REDUCED TO  
 RUBBLE.

10. ONE ACCOUNT, SOURCED TO THE MUJAHIDIN, CLAIMED  
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THAT 600 CIVILIANS WERE KILLED AND POSSIBLY AS MANY AS  
 TWICE THAT NUMBER WOUNDED. ATTACKS ALSO WERE NOTED AT  
 KHENJ IN THE PANJSHIR WHICH SUFFERED ATTACKS BY SCUD  
 MISSILES AND AIRCRAFT. IN ADDITION TO AREAS ALONG THE  
 SALANG HIGHWAY AND PANJSHIR VALLEY, SETTLEMENTS IN THE  
 GHORBAND VALLEY, INCLUDING THE TOWN OF ASHWAEA AND IN  
 A VALLEY BETWEEN THE PANJSHIR AND THE SALANG WERE  
 HEAVILY TARGETED. AT LEAST FOURTEEN SCUD MISSILES  
 FELL IN THE PANJSHIR -- SIX AT BAZARAK, FOUR AT  
 PUSHGHOR AND FOUR AT KHENJ. (EMBASSY KABUL RECENTLY  
 HAS REPORTED THE FAIRLY REGULAR ARRIVAL OF SCUD  
 MISSILES IN KABUL, POSSIBLY THE SITE OF AT LEAST SOME  
 OF THE LAUNCHES.) ACCORDING TO MUJAHIDIN REPORTING,  
 SCUD FIRING AT KHENJ KILLED 70 CIVILIANS.

11. THE SITUATION FOR SURVIVORS OF THESE ATTACKS IS  
 BLEAK. SURVIVORS HAVE BEEN LEFT HOMELESS IN THE MIDST  
 OF ONE OF THE WORST WINTERS IN RECENT MEMORY, IN MOST  
 CASES WITHOUT PROVISIONS.

12. MUJAHIDIN SOURCES, EARLIER, REPORTED HEAVY  
 BOMBING ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIAN AND MUJAHIDIN TARGETS  
 NORTH OF THE AREA TARGETED IN THESE RAIDS, ALTHOUGH  
 STILL WITHIN THE AREA UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE  
 "COUNCIL OF THE NORTH" OF AHMED SHAH MASOUD. AREAS  
 INCLUDED PARTS OF BAGHLAN, PARWAN AND KAPISA VALLEY.

13. THE SOVIET BOMBING AND MISSILE ATTACKS CAN NOT BE  
 EXPLAINED BY A PUTATIVE SOVIET DESIRE TO PROTECT ITS  
 RETREATING TROOPS. MUJAHIDIN HAVE NOT BEEN ATTACKING  
 THE WITHDRAWING SOVIET TROOPS ON THE SALANG OR  
 ELSEWHERE. THE CIVILIAN SETTLEMENTS ATTACKED POSED NO  
 CLEARLY POSED NO THREAT TO THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL.  
 MOREOVER, SOME OF THE SITES ATTACKED ON JANUARY 23,

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ARE FAR FROM THE SALANG ROAD. ASHWAER FOR EXAMPLE,  
IS LOCATED 15 KMS EAST OF THE SALANG. KHENJ IS

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LOCATED OVER 40 KMS NORTHEAST OF SALANG ROAD. RATHER,

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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITREP: JANUARY 23 - 29, 1989.  
 IT APPEARS THE MASSIVE SOVIET BOMBING, SUPPLEMENTED BY SCUD MISSILE FIRINGS AND CONTINUED LAYING OF MINES (BY BOTH SOVIET AND REGIME TROOPS) ENTAILS A DECISION BY RETREATING SOVIET TROOPS TO LEAVE BROAD DESTRUCTION IN THEIR WAKE.

14. MEANWHILE, IN KANDAHAR, SOVIET FORCES, JANUARY 30, WERE CONDUCTING RESUPPLY OPERATIONS INTO KANDAHAR AIRPORT. ONE RELIABLE BUT UNCONFIRMED AFGHAN ACCOUNT CLAIMED THAT SOVIET AIRCRAFT WERE FLYING AS MANY AS 35-40 FLIGHTS OF SUPPLIES INTO KANDAHAR AIRPORT PER DAY. A SOVIET CONTINGENT WAS REPORTED ON THE GROUND DIRECTING THE AIRLIFT. SOVIET AIRCRAFT, MOSTLY FLOWN FROM SHINDAND AIRBASE IN FARAH PROVINCE, CONTINUED TO BOMB IN AND AROUND KANDAHAR WITH REPORTS IN JANUARY OF OCCASIONAL BOMBS STRIKING INSIDE THE CITY ITSELF AS WELL AS THE HEAVILY POPULATED CORRIDOR WEST OF THE CITY.

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 MUJAHIDIN OPERATIONS:

15. MUJAHIDIN CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON JALALABAD AND OTHER AREAS. AT JALALABAD, IN ORDER TO RELIEVE THE EFFECTS OF A PROTRACTED SIEGE ON THE BELEAGUED POPULATION, MUJAHIDIN BEGAN TRUCKING FOOD INTO THE CITY. THE OPERATION SUCCESSFULLY BROUGHT FOOD TO SOME OF THE NEEDY CIVILIANS IN THE CITY, DESPITE REGIME EFFORTS TO BLOCK THE HUMANITARIAN RESUPPLY BY ARTILLERY BARRAGE.

16. IN KANDAHAR AREA, MUJAHIDIN HAVE FOLLOWED UP ON SEIZURE OF SIGNIFICANT HIGH GROUND LOCATIONS SOUTHEAST OF KANDAHAR AIRPORT BY ADVANCING TOWARD A KEY BRIDGE SOUTH OF THE AIRPORT ON THE ROAD WHICH LINKS KANDAHAR TO THE PAKISTANI BORDER. THE BRIDGE IS BETWEEN THE AIRPORT AND TWO MAJOR REGIME CONTINGENTS AT TAKHTI PUL AND TOUR KOTAL. SHOULD THE MUJAHIDIN SUCCEED IN CUTTING OFF THESE CONTINGENTS, AND SECURING THEIR SURRENDER, THE AIRPORT WILL BE OPEN TO MUJAHIDIN PRESSURE FROM THE SOUTH.

17. MUJAHIDIN HAVE ALREADY EFFECTIVELY SEVERED THE MAIN AIRPORT ROAD (26 KMS) FROM KANDAHAR CITY TO THE AIRPORT AND A DETOUR THAT THE REGIME ATTEMPTED TO USE IN ITS PLACE. AS OF LATE JANUARY, MUJAHIDIN WERE ROCKETING THE AIRPORT FROM POINTS ALONG A LINE SEVEN KMS WEST OF THE AIRPORT. MUJAHIDI WERE UNABLE HOWEVER, TO HALT AIR TRAFFIC INTO AND OUT OF THE AIRPORT.

18. MEANWHILE, MUJAHIDIN FROM VARIOUS PARTIES, DURING MUCH OF JANUARY CONTINUED TO ATTEMPT TO PUT PRESSURE

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ON THE SOVIET AIRBASE AT SHINDAND IN FARAH PROVINCE  
FROM WHICH SOVIET AIRSTRIKES AGAINST KANDAHAR AND

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ELSEWHERE ARE CONDUCTED. OWING PRINCIPALLY TO THE

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USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAFF//

USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJE-IOM//

DEFENSE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT GROUP

RUCLFNA/347 TFW MOODY AFB GA//IN//

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

FSTC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA/AIAST-IO/CMII//

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MSGBN QUANTICO VA

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MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS; PARIS ALSO FOR

USDAO; DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR NEA/PAB, MR. BRUNO AND

SPOKESMAN; USIA FOR USIA/NEA/A AND VOA; CASABLANCA FOR

CO A; ATHENS FOR ATO

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PREL, MOPS, MCAP, PHUM, PINS, PINR, PROP, PREF,

ASEC, UR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITREP: JANUARY 23, 1989

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WIDE DEFENSE BELT AROUND THE AIRPORT MANNED BY SOVIET TROOPS. MUJAHIDIN PRESSURE WAS NOT VERY EFFECTIVE.

(NOTE REPORT ABOVE OF THE PULLOUT OF SOVIET TROOPS FROM THIS DEFENSE BELT IN LATE JANUARY.)

## FOOD NEEDS IN AFGHANISTAN

19. WHILE MUCH ATTENTION CONTINUES TO FOCUS ON FOOD NEED IN KABUL, FOOD NEED ELSEWHERE, SOME OF IT SEVERE, AND FREQUENTLY CHRONIC, GOES UNADDRESSED. REFUGEES FROM SOUTH AND WEST AFGHANISTAN, FOR EXAMPLE, REPORT GENERAL FOOD NEED THROUGHOUT THE REGION. CAUSES FOR SHORTAGES, ARE USUALLY WAR-RELATED. SEVERE FOOD SHORTAGES IN TARINKOWT, CAPITAL OF ORUZGAN, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE THE RESULT OF INTENSE AERIAL BOMBING SINCE LATE 1988. THE BOMBING PRECLUDED ANY AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY. CIVILIANS ARE REPORTEDLY FLEEING THE TOWN IN SEARCH OF FOOD. ELSEWHERE, LOCUSTS AND DAMAGED TRANSPORT SYSTEMS ARE FACTORS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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**FOOD SHORTAGES.**

**DIPLOMATIC DEVELOPMENTS:**

20. AS JANUARY DREW TO A CLOSE, MOST WESTERN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, INCLUDING THE U.S., JAPANESE, WEST GERMAN, BRITISH, FRENCH AND ITALIAN EMBASSIES ANNOUNCED PLANS TO CLOSE THEIR DOORS AND EVACUATE THEIR EX-PATRIATE STAFF. THE DECISIONS REFLECTED THE DETERIORATING SECURITY CONDITIONS IN THE CITY. THE MISSION CLOSINGS FOLLOW A DRAWDOWN IN RECENT MONTHS OF UN AND OTHER MISSION STAFFS.

**OAKLEY**

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